

County Line

News from the Government Offices of Lumpkin County, Georgia

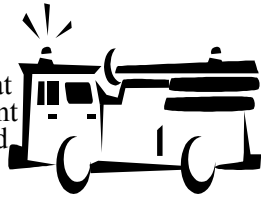
Vol. 4, No. 2

September 2008



Fire Safety Ratings Improve

Thanks to ongoing professionalism at the Lumpkin County Fire Department and 911 Communications Center and improvements in the City of Dahlonega water system, the fire safety rating for residences and businesses in the city limits will improve effective Nov. 1, 2008, resulting in lower insurance premiums for many. Lumpkin County Fire Chief Ed Eggert received the good news from the independent Insurance Services Offices (ISO) ratings agency Aug. 4, about a year after the evaluation within



the city limits took place.

Coincidentally, the county learned of the improved rating in the city limits the

same day ISO began its evaluation of the area served by the county's new Fire Station No. 4, a process that also may be lengthy, but is expected to result in reduced rates for many located near that station, too. While the ISO rating within the city limits improved two points (from a 7 to a 5, on a scale of 10-1), it was so close to a 4 based on year-old information that Chief Eggert is appealing to the ISO for an even lower rating.

Registered to Vote? Are You Sure?

Kimberly Pruitt, Lumpkin County's supervisor of elections and chief registrar, isn't afraid of much. But she is afraid that many Lumpkin County citizens who believe they are registered to vote may not be. That's easy enough to fix in time to vote in the November 4th Presidential Election, but only if it's fixed by the Oct. 6 voter registration deadline. That's why all potential voters are being asked to check their voting status. You can do that online at <http://sos.georgia.gov/elections/polllocator> or by simply calling the Lumpkin County Registrar's Office at (706)864-6279 during business hours and asking.

State law requires the office to delete from the voting roster the names of people who haven't either voted or submitted a change of name or address after a fairly short period of inactivity, in this case if they didn't vote in the 2004 and 2006 General Elections or update their files. And who really remembers for sure whether they did or not? Another benefit of checking your status: You'll be sure to show up at the right precinct on voting day and have an easy voting experience. If you are not registered or need to change your registration information, you can get an application to register or make changes online at

www.lumpkincounty.gov/Registrar.html or stop by the Registrar's Office in the County Courthouse, the Lumpkin County Library, The Department of Drivers Services, Department of Family and Children's Services or the Health Department. Just be sure to do it by Oct. 6.

Get a Kit. Make a Plan. Be Informed.

Lumpkin County continues to take the lead on our community's plan to respond to an Influenza Pandemic if—or when—one occurs. A comprehensive plan has been developed, front line responders have conducted a "tabletop" walk-through of that plan, and this Fall they will



exercise the plan in a simulated practice run. A committee continues to evaluate and improve the plan, but please remember that our local agencies would not be able to solve all the challenges involved in such a widespread health disaster. Citizens would have to assume a greater than ever responsibility for their own and their families' safety and well-being. It is a fact that people who are prepared for disasters fare better than those who are not. September is National Preparedness Month. Please make it a priority to prepare for a disaster in whatever form it might take, whether a pandemic, a weather event, a terrorism attack or other disaster. "Get a Kit. Make a Plan. Be Informed." Information sources include www.pandemicflu.gov or call 1 (800) CDC-INFO.

Water Reports Available

Lumpkin County Water & Sewerage Authority customers can learn about the quality of their drinking water by reading the latest Consumer Confidence Reports, which compare the results of monitoring and testing with state and federal standards. Copies are available at the Water Authority office. Call (706) 867-6580 for details.

Get Your Next Job Lead on TV!

Job hunting? You just might find the job lead you need on TV. JobTV, that is. The Lumpkin County Development Authority sponsors this program, produced by the Georgia Department of Labor, and broadcast on Windstream cable television. That's Channel 4 in Lumpkin County. The program airs Monday through Friday from 5am to 8am (it repeats at the top of each hour) and midnight to 1am for the late owls. It features 160 job openings from Lumpkin and surrounding counties each hour—updated daily—along with helpful hints about job hunting and how to make use of the many ways the Department of Labor helps connect employers with workers.



Progress Report: Judicial Center

The bulldozers moved in last month and site work for the new Judicial Center is well underway. The grading, water and sewer, site lighting, utilities and parking lot base should be completed in January 2009. With the facility design about halfway through, this is the point where the benefits of the "construction management at risk" model of project management really become apparent, according to Kevin Hamby of Clough, Harbour & Associates. "We design to a certain point, then get cost estimates. This is the step that tells us where the project is in relation to the budget." It's still fairly easy to "value engineer" and make adjustments to the wish list to prevent going over budget—over the guaranteed maximum price. Once the team is satisfied the design is in tune with the resources allocated, the design will be completed and the architects will create blueprints, specifications and bidding documents for the construction phase. Construction on the facility itself is expected to begin by Thanksgiving.



Lumpkin County . . . continued from reverse side

And the Winner Is...

She is innovative and ethical, has a knack for saving the county money and is always ready to tackle that next challenge.



These are a few of the reasons Jodi Ligon was named Lumpkin County Employee of the Year this summer. Jodi, who has worked for the county since 2005, is purchasing agent in the finance department. She is credited with saving the county more than \$10,000 on the Yahoola Creek Park entrance and sign project. She also oversaw the transition to using GovDeals.com for disposal of surplus county property and oversaw implementation of the fleet card system, which has saved the county thousands in fuel costs. Just as important as these major accomplishments, though, is Jodi's cheerful attitude day in and day out. And she's the first one to offer support to her coworkers and share the credit when the praise comes down.

Also nominated by their department heads for the Employee of the Year honor were Michael Benna, Lyman Caldwell, Michael Davis, Jessica Edwards and Pam Stewart.

Recycling Bin Blues

Feeling down about losing those convenient blue recycling bins near Georgia 400 and Long Branch Road? Well, maybe you'll feel better knowing their fate. They've been moved from a location that was getting only a fair amount of use to a location that really needed them—Lumpkin County High School on Highway 19 North. The high school bins had been filling up so fast that the Recycling truck



had to pick up there twice a day. Besides running up costs for labor, wear and tear on the vehicle and fuel, all that extra driving seemed contrary to what recycling is all about—wise use of resources. In addition, the high traffic location near Georgia 400 was beginning to see problems with illegal dumping, adding clean-up and disposal costs to the county's bills. Since the main recycling facility is located just two miles away on Red Oak Flats Road, recyclers in the southern part of the county are being asked to take their recyclables there instead. Lumpkin County and the North Georgia Resource Management Authority (NGRMA) appreciate your efforts. Questions or concerns? Contact NGRMA director Leslie George at (706) 894-2785 or visit ngrma@alltel.net.

Oops...Let's Get SPLOST Story Right



It was previously reported in the County Line that Lumpkin County has fully retired a \$16 million, 15-year loan secured in 2001 to address a severe fiscal crisis—8 years early. The fact is, as of March 2008, the SPLOST approved by voters in 2001 to pay down that debt had *generated* the full amount of money needed to retire the debt. The money collected by that SPLOST is accounted for separately from the general fund and will be used exclusively to make the remaining payments on the loan as scheduled. Why not just pay it off now? The terms of the loan include hefty penalties for paying off the loan early.

What's Your Sign (Plan)?

Eager to clean up an explosion of unsightly temporary signs in county rights of way while still helping potential customers find local businesses, the county contracted last year with a private sign company that would build and lease to business owners attractive, consistent, directional signage. Local businesses, however, didn't warm up to the plan, and the fees were cost prohibitive for most. As a result, that plan has been scrapped. Through an agreement between the

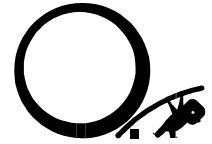


county and the Dahlonega-Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce, the chamber will manage an alternative member-directed sign plan to support the tourism industry while suiting local needs and wallets. The program is designed to be self-supporting but not profit driven. Participants' costs will reflect actual program expenses plus an annual administrative fee, with the cost for a single sign panel set at \$300. The goal is to have the first signs erected by September 15. Contact the chamber at (706) 864-3711 for important program details and an application.

4-Day Week for Roads Department



The 20-person Lumpkin County Roads Department is operating on a four-day work week these days to save taxpayer dollars. Employees still work 40 hour weeks, but the schedule reduces cross-county vehicle miles since projects often can be completed in fewer work days—with fewer trips to and from the shop and less fuel use. An added benefit: Routine maintenance is scheduled for Fridays so vehicles don't have to be taken out of service during operational hours. Since the road crews can't work in the dark, they'll return to their Monday through Friday schedule when Daylight Savings Time ends in October.



Working for You!

If you have a problem, question or concern involving your county government, answers and assistance are as close as your phone or computer. For contact information for county departments or commissioners, see Dept. and Contact Info., www.lumpkincounty.gov or call (706) 864-3742.

Board of Commissioners

Steve Gooch, Chairman
Dr. John Raber, District 1
Deborah Hutcheson, District 2
Clarence Stowers, District 3
Clarence Grindle, District 4

Stan Kelley
County Manager

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County Not "Fueling Around" About Saving

Fuel prices are high and hard to budget for. To control costs and save taxpayer dollars, Lumpkin County has adopted a 20% Fuel Reduction Policy. Here are some ways departments are cutting down:

- Not idling engines in unattended vehicles (except as required on emergency calls).
- Coordinating trips and inter-office deliveries to off-site departments to reduce total miles driven.
- Driving below speed limits (except emergency responders, who are limited to 10 mph over the limit).
- Leaving county vehicles at work, except emergency responders on 24-hour call.
- Not driving county vehicles to lunch, except field personnel if the restaurant is on route of county business.
- Keeping daily gas logs on county vehicles so miles per gallon can be calculated and to alert county mechanics of problems that can affect fuel efficiency.